

The consolidation of media into larger and more encompassing entities decreases competition and centralizes the power of influence in a way that makes companies more likely to be able to sway public opinion in a partisan way to benefit their financial bottom line. Sinclair Broadcast Group's recent actions have illustrated the dangers of media consolidation.

Sinclair is obligated by law to serve the public interest because it uses the public airwaves free of charge. The preemption of previously scheduled programming to air anti-Kerry documentary "Stolen Honor" just before the election is a blatant example of partisan advertising trying to get around election laws. And in this act it is supporting political parties that will help their further monopolizing of the media, and pretending that it is "news".

This is an example showing that when large companies control the airwaves, we get more of what's good for the bottom line and less of what we need for our democracy. We need more and diverse voices providing us with multiple views of the complex world we live in, not a government/party mouthpiece.

Sinclair's actions show why we need to strengthen media ownership rules, not weaken them. We need to improve the license renewal process so that companies are evaluated by how they promote the democratic ideals and process of our country. Even if we need larger companies to manage the communication infrastructure efficiently, they need to be barred from influence on content delivered, which should be relegated to more local independent stations. A few large businesses should not be allowed to manage large blocks of our public airwaves for their own financial gain without regard for their effect on our communities and country. Thank you.